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Public Health Department.

ANNUAL REPORT

ON THE HEALTH OF THE
Skelmersdale Urban District
DURING THE YEAR
1939

BY
HERBERT E. MARSDEN, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.

*Of Gray's Inn, Barrister-at-Law,
Justice of the Peace for the County of Lancaster.*

Medical Officer of Health.

—
ORMSKIRK:
T. HUTTON, "THE ADVERTISER" OFFICE, CHURCH STREET, ORMSKIRK.

SKELMERSDALE

**URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL,
1939.**

Chairman :—T. A. FARRIMOND.

Vice-Chairman :—J. WATKINSON.

T. R. ASPINWALL.

WALTER JAS. BROWN.

ED. DRAPER.

JAMES DRAPER.

WM. J. FENNEY.

THOS. HILTON.

JAS. HODSON.

HY. MARSDEN.

WM. SHAW.

JOHN JOS. VEALL.

J. T. WAREING.

JOHN WRIGHT.

WM. G. KEATES.

ANNUAL REPORT.

*To the Chairman and Members of the Skelmersdale Urban
District Council.*

GENTLEMEN,

I have pleasure in presenting my Annual Report for the year 1939, which, in accordance with Government instructions, is merely statistical in form and conveys the bare essentials required to conserve our records.

Yours obediently,

(Signed) HERBERT E. MARSDEN,

Medical Officer of Health.

December, 1940.

SECTION A. STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

Medical Officer of Health—HERBERT E. MARSDEN,
J.P., M.B., D.P.H., Barrister-at-Law.
(Medical Officer of Health for the West Lancashire Rural
District.)

Sanitary Inspector—G. A. GILL, Cert.S.I.B., M.S.I.A.

Area of District—1,942 acres.

Resident population (Registrar General's estimate at mid-1939)—6,021.

Number of inhabited houses, according to Rate Books at end of 1939—1,675.

Rateable value—£18,967. Sum represented by a penny rate—£72.

The following are the chief industries carried on in the area, with details of the number of operatives employed :—

WORKS.		OPERATIVES.	
Straw Rope Works	80
Shoe Factory	559
Weaving Works	143

In addition, 26 Skelmersdale people are employed at a brickworks just outside the town.

Skelmersdale is part of the Ormskirk employment area. Separate unemployment figures for Skelmersdale are not available, but there were 1,210 names on the Ormskirk register at the end of 1939, as against 1,436 at the end of 1938.

SUMMARY OF VITAL STATISTICS FOR 1939.

	Total	M.	F.
Live Births (Legitimate)	89	46	43
(Illegitimate)	3	1	2

Birth Rate per 1,000 of the estimated population—15·2.

Stillbirths	3	1	2
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Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births—15·7.

Deaths.....	71	33	38
-------------	----	----	----

Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population—11·7.

Adjusted Death Rate (comparability factor 1.19)—13·9 per 1,000.

Deaths from Puerperal Causes :—	Deaths.
Puerperal sepsis	nil
Other puerperal causes	nil
Total	nil
Deaths of Infants under one year of age :—	
All infants per 1,000 live births.....	76
Legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate live births	78
Illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births	nil
Deaths from Measles (all ages)	nil
„ „ Whooping Cough (all ages)	nil
„ „ Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age)	nil

BIRTHS.

The number of births recorded in the Urban District during the year was 92, equal to a rate of 15·2 per 1,000 of the population. This represents an increase of 2·7 on the figure for 1938, and an increase of 0·7 on the five years' average 1934–1938.

DEATHS.

The total deaths registered in the Urban District during the year numbered 71. Of this number 33 were males and 38 were females.

The crude death rate for the year was thus 11·7 per 1,000, and was 2 per 1,000 more than in 1938, and 1·2 more than the mean of the five years average 1934-1938.

ZYMOTIC DEATH RATE.

There were no deaths during the year due to Zymotic diseases.

EPIDEMIC DEATH RATE.

There were no deaths during the year due to Epidemic diseases.

INFANTILE MORTALITY.

There were 7 deaths of infants under one year of age, which gives an infantile mortality rate of 76 per 1,000 births.

Following is a comparison of the foregoing rates with those of England and Wales :—

	Birth Rate per 1000 living.	Death Rate per 1000 living.	Epidemic Death Rate per 1000 living.	Infantile Mortality per 1000 Births.
England and Wales ..	15.0	12.1	0.03	50
Skelmersdale U.D. ..	15.2	13.9	nil.	76

CAUSES OF DEATH IN THE SKELMERSDALE URBAN DISTRICT, 1939.

Causes.	Males.	Females.
Typhoid and Paratyphoid Fevers.....	—	—
Measles	—	—
Scarlet Fever	—	—
Whooping Cough	—	—
Diphtheria	—	—
Influenza	2	1
Encephalitis Lethargica	—	—
Cerebro-spinal Fever.....	1	—
Respiratory Tuberculosis	4	—
Other tuberculous diseases	—	—
Syphilis	—	—
General paralysis of the insane, tabes dorsalis	—	—
Cancer, malignant disease	3	2
Diabetes	—	—
Cerebral hæmorrhage, etc.	1	4

Causes.	Males.	Females.
Heart Disease	13	17
Aneurysm	—	—
Other Circulatory Diseases.....	1	2
Bronchitis	1	—
Pneumonia	—	—
Peptic Ulcer.....	1	—
Diarrhœa, etc. (under 2 years)	—	—
Appendicitis	1	—
Cirrhosis of liver	—	—
Other diseases of liver	—	—
Other digestive diseases	1	—
Acute and chronic nephritis	—	1
Puerperal sepsis	—	—
Other puerperal diseases	—	—
Congenital debility, premature birth, etc.	—	4
Senility	—	1
Suicide	—	—
Other violence	1	1
Other defined diseases	3	5
Ill-defined causes	—	—
Deaths of Infants under 1 year.		
Total	2	5
Legitimate	2	5
Illegitimate	—	—

SECTION B. GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA.

LABORATORY FACILITIES.

Pathological and bacteriological specimens are sent to the appropriate departments of the University of Liverpool, Wigan Infirmary, Southport Infirmary and to Messrs. Evans, Lescher and Webb, Runcorn, for examination.

Chemical analysis of water, when required, is done at Messrs. Evans' laboratories at Runcorn.

The following examinations were made during the year :—
One hundred and forty swabs were examined for the presence of *Bacillus Diphtheriæ* ; twenty-seven of these proved positive. Six swabs were examined for Meningococci were all negative.

AMBULANCE FACILITIES.

No ambulance is maintained in the township by the Local Authority or otherwise. Nevertheless, the ambulance facilities are completely adequate.

The Ormskirk General Hospital and the Wigan Royal Infirmary take cases from Skelmersdale, and both provide ambulances. The Lancashire Public Assistance Committee also have an ambulance attached to their Hospital at Ormskirk.

The West Lancashire Rural District Council remove infectious cases in their ambulance by contract with the Skelmersdale Council.

NURSING IN THE HOME.

The Skelmersdale District Nursing Association is affiliated to the County Nursing Association. Its district includes Burscough Bridge, Lathom, Westhead, Hoscar and Newburgh, all of which townships are now in the Urban District of Ormskirk.

The following table gives particulars of the work done in Skelmersdale by the Nursing Association during the year, 1st January, 1939. to 31st December, 1939.

Midwifery.	CASES NURSED.				VISITS.			TOTAL.	
	Maternity.	Medical.	Surgical.	T.B.	Nursing.	Ante-Natal	T.B.	Cases.	Visits.
—	—	66	46	1	2899	—	269	113	3168

CLINICS AND TREATMENT CENTRES.

The Congregational Schoolroom in Witham Road is utilised every Wednesday morning as a Child Welfare Centre and Minor Ailments Clinic, under the direction of the appropriate Department of the County Medical Officer of Health.

An Immunisation Clinic is held every Tuesday afternoon at 2 o'clock on the same premises by the District Medical Officer of Health.

HOSPITALS: PUBLIC AND VOLUNTARY.

There are no hospitals in the town.

The Ormskirk Public Assistance Hospital, and the voluntary hospitals at Ormskirk and Wigan, provide ample accommodation for medical and surgical cases, and there is a maternity ward at the Public Assistance Hospital.

Infectious cases are admitted to the West Lancashire Rural Council's hospital at Aughton, by agreement with that Authority, whilst smallpox and cerebro-spinal fever cases go to Liverpool, also by agreement.

SECTION C. SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

WATER SUPPLY.

The supply of water in the district continues to be on the whole satisfactory in quality and quantity. 1650 houses are connected with the main.

The whole of the district is supplied with water by the Southport and District Water Board, from an artesian well, situated at Scarth Hill, in the parish of Lathom, in the Ormskirk Urban District.

It was not found necessary during the year to examine the supply, as this is undertaken systematically by the Water Board who send copies of analyses to the Medical Officer of Health.

SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

The district is sewered on the partly separate system. The sewage from approximately 1,137 houses in the principal housing area is discharged by gravity through a 24 inch outfall sewer at the Council's Berry Street Disposal Works and that from 255 houses in this area, by a 15 inch outfall sewer at their Penny Lane Works.

The sewage at both works is treated by settlement and land irrigation, and periodical cleansing and repairs are carried out.

A new Sewerage Scheme is under consideration and would be a decided improvement to the township.

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

Privy middens—110. No. of closets attached to these middens—143.

No. of pail closets—29.

No. of dry ashpits (excluding middens)—5.

No. of movable ashbins.—1502.

No. of houses on water carriage system—1650.

No. of fresh water closets—1502.

PUBLIC CLEANSING.

Dry refuse from pails and closets is collected weekly and refuse from earth closets and privies is emptied monthly.

The dry refuse is taken to a tip provided by the Council, and the refuse from earth closets and privies is taken to the tip or used by farmers as manure.

SUMMARY OF WORK DONE IN THE SANITARY
INSPECTOR'S DEPARTMENT DURING
THE YEAR 1939.

PUBLIC HEALTH ACTS.	Number of Informal Notices by Inspector.	Number of Formal Notices by Order of Authority.	TOTAL.
Dwelling Houses and Schools :			
Foul Conditions	3	—	3
Structural Defects	421	—	421
Dairies and Milkshops	—	—	—
Cowsheds	18	—	18
Bakehouses	13	—	13
Ashpits and Privies	40	—	40
Deposits of Refuse and Manure	11	1	12
Water Closets	16	—	16
Defective Yard Paving	10	—	10
House Drainage	28	—	28
Water Supply	—	—	—
Animals Improperly kept	5	—	5
Lack of Sanitary Dustbins	88	—	88
Insufficient Close Accommodation	11	—	11
Smoke Nuisances	5	—	5
Dangerous Buildings	2	—	2
	671	1	672

SCHOOLS.

The town is well supplied with four schools, three of which are voluntary.

The medical inspection of the children is undertaken by the School Medical Department of the Lancashire County Council.

The numbers on roll at the end of 1939 in all the schools totalled 771.

Certain structural improvements at the Council School are still required, e.g., in the Infants' Department there is no partition to separate the Boys' from the Girls' lavatories, and class-room windows require enlarging. The Boys' Department is draughty from faulty windows and cloakroom accommodation is inadequate.

At the Endowed School, a new wall has been added to the playground during the year, and electric light has been installed.

The school yard at the Methodist School is still in a very bad condition, but unfortunately nothing can be done to improve it until the war is finished.

SECTION D. HOUSING.

The standard of housing in the district generally is very low, although prior to the present hostilities some little progress was being made in the repair or demolition of certain of the worst properties.

The majority of the houses in the district are of the working-class type, and approximately 50% have only two bedrooms.

HOUSING STATISTICS FOR 1939.

No. of new houses erected during the year :—

(a) Total (including nos. given separately under (b)....	16
(i) By the Local Authority	—
(ii) By other Local Authorities	—
(iii) By other bodies and persons	16
(b) With State assistance under the Housing Acts :—	
(i) By the Local Authority	—
(ii) By other bodies or persons	—
1. INSPECTION OF DWELLING HOUSES DURING THE YEAR :—	
(1) (a) Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	113
(b) No. of inspections made for the purpose	226
(2) (a) Number of dwelling houses which were inspected and recorded under Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925 & 1932	45
(b) No. of inspections made for the purpose	90
(3) Number of dwelling houses found to be unfit for human habitation	45

(4) Number of dwelling houses found not to be reasonably fit for human habitation	68
2. REMEDY OF DEFECTS DURING THE YEAR WITHOUT SERVICE OF FORMAL NOTICE.	
No. of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers	83
3. ACTION UNDER STATUTORY POWERS DURING THE YEAR:—	
A. Proceedings under Sections 9, 10 and 16 of the Housing Act, 1936 :—	
(1) No. of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs	33
(2) No. of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notice	33
C. Proceedings under sections 11 and 13 of the Housing Act, 1936 :—	
(1) No. of dwelling houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made	6
(2) No. of dwelling houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders.....	6
D. Proceedings under Section 12 of the Housing Act, 1936 :—	
(1) No. of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made	nil
(2) No. of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the tenement or room having been rendered fit	nil

SECTION E.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD. SALE OF FOOD AND DRUGS ACT.

This Act is administered by the County Police. The accompanying figures have been supplied by the Superintendent of Police at Seaforth :—

Samples.	Purchases.
Milk	14
Butter	1
Tea	1
Sugar	1
Meat Paste	1
Semolina	1
Beef Suet	1
Mustard	1
Total	21

No proceedings were instituted in connection with any of the above samples.

DAIRIES, COWSHEDS AND MILKSHOPS.

At the end of the year there were 104 cows on 8 dairy farms. 9 cowkeepers, 9 dairies and purveyors of milk, 10 shops supplying milk in bottles, and 2 Registered Purveyors with premises outside the area.

Under the Milk in Schools Scheme, 6 samples of milk were taken. Typical Tuberculous Lesions were developed from one of the samples, and the offending animal was traced and subsequently destroyed.

Four samples were also submitted for examination for B. Tuberculosis, one sample for evidence of B. Coli (Manurial Contamination) and one sample for efficiency of pasteurisation. All these samples complied with the required standards.

During the year, 2 animals were dealt with under the T.B. Order of 1938.

Periodical inspections were made of the cowsheds. In some instances certain alterations and improvements are necessary, and the Council have decided to ask for this work to be done in the near future.

MEAT.

No slaughtering was carried out during the year, and neither of the two slaughterhouses have been registered under the Food and Drugs Act, 1938.

BAKEHOUSES.

There are 7 bakehouses at present in occupation in the township. Periodic limewashing has been carried out and in one instance it was found that domestic washing was also being carried out in the bakehouses. This has since been remedied.

SECTION F. INFECTIOUS DISEASES. STATISTICS.

	Smallpox	Enteric Fever.	Scarlet Fever.	Measles.	Diphtheria.	Puerperal Pyrexia.	Erysipelas.	Cerebro-Spinal fever.	Poliomyelitis.	Malaria.	Whooping Cough.	Chickenpox.
Cases	—	—	1	4	2	—	2	1	1	—	2	—
Case Rate per 1000	—	—	.17	.66	.33	—	0.33	.17	.17	—	.33	—
Deaths.. ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
Death Rate per 1000	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.17	—	—	—	—
Percentage of deaths to case	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	100	—	—	—	—

It was not found necessary to resort to school closure during the year.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES DURING THE YEAR, 1939.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES.	TOTAL CASES NOTIFIED.													Hospital.		
	Total Cases at all Ages.	YEARS.											Total Deaths.	Total Cases removed to Hospital.	Deaths in Hospital of persons belonging to district	
		Un-der 1 year	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-35	35-45	45-65				65 & over
Erysipelas	2										1	1				
Smallpox																
Scarlet Fever	1					1									1	
Diphtheria	2				1	1									2	
Enteric fever																
Pneumonia	2							1								1
Puerperal Pyrexia																
Acute Pollomycylitis	1															
Cerebro-splnal Fever	1								1						1	1
Encephalitis Lethargica																
Ophthalmia Neonatorum																
Pulmonary Tuberculos's	2					1						1			1	1
Other forms of Tuberculosis	2									1		1			3	
TOTALS	13		1		1	3	1	2			3	1	1	5	9	2

The following table shows the number, monthly distribution, and nature of cases of infectious disease coming under the notice of the Medical Officer of Health during 1938 :—

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Totals	Removed to Hospital
Anthrax	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Small-pox	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Scarlet Fever	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1	—	1	1
Diphtheria and Croup	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	2	2
Enteric Fever	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Acute primary and acute Influenzal Pneumonia	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	2	—
Puerperal Pyrexia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Acute Poliomyelitis	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
Encephalitis Lethargica	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cerebro-spinal Fever	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
Malaria	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dysentery	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Erysipelas	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	2	—
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
MONTHLY TOTALS	2	1	—	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	2	2	9	5

SUMMARY OF HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS AND DISCHARGES, 1939.

ADMISSIONS.	Scarlet Fever	.....	.....	1
	Diphtheria	.....	.....	2
	Diphtheria Carriers	.....	.....	5
				—
				8
				—
DISCHARGES.	Scarlet Fever	.....	.....	1
	Diphtheria	.....	.....	2
	Diphtheria Carriers	.....	.....	5
				—
				8
				—
Journeys with ambulance				10
Journeys for bedding				13
Houses attended for disinfection				10
No. of times disinfector was used				6
Rooms sprayed				17
Articles stoved				110

TABLE SHOWING INCIDENCE AND MORTALITY
FROM SCARLET FEVER, 1926—1939.

	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
Cases	2	—	3	71	13	4	11	8	10	9	12	7	10	1
Deaths	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Case Rate per 1000 inhabi- tants	29	—	.45	10.45	1.8	.64	1.7	1.3	1.6	1.5	1.97	1.1	1.65	.17
Death Rate per 1000 inhabi- tants	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

TABLE SHOWING INCIDENCE AND MORTALITY
FROM DIPHTHERIA, 1926—1939.

	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
Cases	1	4	2	47	28	9	2	3	6	2	1	2	16	2
Deaths	—	1	—	2	1	—	1	1	—	2	1	—	2	—
Case per rate 1000 inhabi- tants	.14	.57	.29	6.9	4.1	1.4	.16	.49	.99	.33	.16	.3	2.6	.33
Death rate per 1000 inhabi- tants	—	.14	—	29	.14	—	.08	.16	—	.33	.16	—	1.65	—
Fatality rate per 100 cases	—	25	—	4.25	7.1	—	50	33.3	—	100	100	—	12.5	—

Particulars of work done in connection with the scheme for Immunisation against Scarlet Fever and Diphtheria since the commencement in May, 1935, to December 31st, 1939.

SCHOOL.	Acceptances.	Total on register	Percentage immunised actually in school. 31/12/39.	Immunised against diphtheria only.	4 Injections against Scarlet Fever.	3 injections against both diseases.	2 injections against both diseases.	1 injection against both diseases.	Preliminary Schick test.	Preliminary Dick test.	Final Schick test	Schick negative.	Negative after re-test.	Absent or left when results were read.	Later refused treatment.
Council 1935-38 1939	213 18	494 454	14.54	— —	128 18	207 17	— —	1 —	— —	— —	187 62	173 53	7 7	3 2	3 —
Endowed 1935-38 1939	90 —	90 83	51.81	— —	57 —	94 —	— —	— —	6 —	2 —	84 —	73 —	— —	10 —	3 —
Methodist 1935-38 1939	108 —	130 133	47.37	— —	47 —	103 —	— —	2 —	2 —	— —	103 16	88 13	9 1	3 —	3 —
St. R'ard's1935-38 1939	149 9	105 101	65.35	6 —	40 9	142 8	1 —	— —	13 —	— —	129 8	120 8	— —	8 —	1 —
Over 1935-38 School age 1939	12 —	— —		9 —	— —	1 —	— —	— —	— —	— —	3 —	2 —	1 —	— —	— —
Under 1935-38 School age 1939	95 11	— —		91 10	4 1	4 1	— —	— —	— —	— —	— —	— —	— —	— —	— —
Hospital 1935-38 1939	16 —	— —		15 —	— —	— —	— —	— —	1 —	— —	1 —	— —	— —	— —	— —
Totals 1935-38 1939	693 38	819 771	44.77	121 10	268 28	551 26	1 —	3 —	22 —	2 —	498 56	456 74	17 8	24 2	10 —
Evacuees 1939	123	—		5	66	81	17	10	10	—	—	—	—	—	—

TUBERCULOSIS.

NEW CASES AND MORTALITY DURING 1939.

Age Periods.				NEW CASES				DEATHS			
				Respiratory		Non-Respiratory		Respiratory		Non-Respiratory	
				M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
Years.											
0—1	...	...	...					
1—5	...	...	...					
5—10	...	...	...		1						
10—15	...	...	..					
15—20	...	...	...			1					
20—25	...	...	..					
25—35	...	...	...					
35—45	...	...	.	1		1		2			
45—55	...	...							
55—65	...	...	.				1	1			
65 and upwards	...	..						1			
Totals	...	..		1	1	2	0	4	0		
				2		2		4			

NOTIFICATIONS ON FORM I BY MEDICAL OFFICERS OF HOSPITALS.

	Public Assistance Hospitals.	Sanatoria and Pulmonary Hospitals
Pulmonary :—		
Males	—	—
Females	—	1
Non-Pulmonary :—.		
Males	—	2
Females	—	1

Dispensary and sanatorium treatment for tuberculosis is administered by the appropriate department of the Lancashire County Council.

INFLUENZA AND OTHER RESPIRATORY DISEASES.

Three deaths occurred from influenza during the year. There were no deaths due to pneumonia.

